



Tenerife

☑ 922, 822 / POP 890,000

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Best Places to Eat

- ➔ Guaydil (p133)
- ➔ La Hierbita (p128)
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Best Places to Stay

- ➔ Hotel Alhambra (p227)
- ➔ Hotel Adonis Capital (p226)
- ➔ Hotel Sun Holidays (p227)

Why Go?

Tenerife is the striking (and slightly saucy) grand dame in the archipelago family. Attracting over 10 million visitors a year, the island's most famous southern resorts offer Brit-infused revelry and clubbing, combined with white sandy beaches and all-inclusive resorts. But step beyond the lobster-red tourists and what you'll find is a cultured and civilised island of extraordinary diversity.

This potpourri of experiences includes tropical-forest walks and designer-shop struts; dark forays into volcanic lava; a sexy and sultry Carnaval celebration that's second only to Rio, and a stash of museums, temples to modern art and creaky old colonial towns. But above all else, this is an island of drama, and nothing comes more dramatic than the snow-draped Pico del Teide, Spain's tallest mountain and home to some of the most fabulous hiking in all the country.

When to Go

- ➔ December to February is pleasantly warm, except on El Teide where deep winter can see snowfall closing the mountain.
- ➔ Springtime (March to April) is good for hiking and wildflowers. Surfers will find the best waves in March.
- ➔ In the summer months from May to September, expect around 11 hours of daily sunshine with an average of 28°C in August; a few degrees cooler during the surrounding months.
- ➔ As autumn turns from October to November, temperatures fall around the ideal 21°C mark and there's fewer tourists; some hotels may drop their prices slightly.

History

The original inhabitants of Tenerife were primitive cave-dwellers called Guanches, who arrived from North Africa around 200 BC. Tenerife was the last island to fall to the Spanish (in 1496) and subsequently became an important trading centre. As such, it was subject to invasions by marauding pirates and, in 1797, from the British in the battle of Santa Cruz, when Admiral Nelson famously lost his arm (served him right, really).

In 1821 Madrid declared Santa Cruz de Tenerife the capital of the Canaries. The good and great of Las Palmas de Gran Canaria remained incensed about this until 1927, when Madrid finally split the archipelago into two provinces, with Santa Cruz as the provincial capital of Tenerife, La Palma, La Gomera and El Hierro. As economic links between the Canaries and the Americas strengthened, a small exodus of islanders crossed the ocean, notably to Venezuela and Cuba. In later years affluent emigrants and Latin Americans reversed the trend, bringing influences that are still evident in the food and Latino beat of the music of today's Tenerife.

i Getting There & Away

AIR

Two airports serve the island. **Tenerife Sur** (Reina Sofía; ☎ 922 75 95 10; www.aena.es), about 20km east of Playa de las Américas, handles international flights, while almost all inter-island flights (plus a few international and mainland services) use the older and smaller **Tenerife Norte** (Los Rodeos; ☎ 922 63 56 35; www.aena.es). **Binter Canarias** (☎ 092 39 13 92; www.bintercanarias.com) connects the island with the rest of the archipelago.

BOAT

Ferries from Santa Cruz

Buy tickets for all companies from travel agents or from the main **Estación Marítima Muelle Ribera** (Map p124) building in Santa Cruz (from where the Fred Olsen boats leave). Naviera Armas has its base further to the south.

Trasmediterránea Acciona (☎ in Madrid 902 45 46 45; www.trasmediterranea.com; Estación Marítima Muelle Ribera) runs a weekly ferry at 11.30pm every Friday from Santa Cruz de Tenerife that makes the following stops:

- ➔ Las Palmas de Gran Canaria, Gran Canaria (from €22, 8½ hours)
- ➔ Puerto del Rosario, Fuerteventura (from €26, 20½ hours)
- ➔ Arrecife, Lanzarote (from €28, 24 hours)

ROAD DISTANCES (KM)

Puerto de la Cruz	74			
Los Cristianos	158	140		
Puerto de Santiago	73	40	27	
Parador Nacional de Teide	128	90	64	40

Approximate distances only

Naviera Armas (Map p124; ☎ 902 45 65 00; www.navieraarmas.com) runs an extensive ferry service around the islands from Santa Cruz de Tenerife.

- ➔ Las Palmas de Gran Canaria, Gran Canaria (from €31, 2½ hours, 21 weekly)
- ➔ Morre Jable, Fuerteventura (from €70, 6½ hours, one daily)
- ➔ Puerto del Rosario, Fuerteventura (from €62, 11½ hours, one daily)
- ➔ Arrecife, Lanzarote (from €72.50, 11 hours, one daily, Monday to Friday)

Fred Olsen (☎ 902 10 01 07; www.fredolsen.es) has three to six daily ferries from Santa Cruz to Agaete in the northwest of Gran Canaria (€36, 1¼ hours), from where you can take its free bus onwards to Las Palmas (35 minutes).

Ferries from Los Cristianos

Ferries come in and out of the Los Cristianos port day and night. Naviera Armas and the faster, but more expensive, Fred Olsen operate from here. Tickets are available from travel agents or from the main Estación Marítima building.

Routes operated by **Naviera Armas** from Los Cristianos include the following:

- ➔ San Sebastián de la Gomera, La Gomera (€30, one hour, three daily Monday to Friday, one Saturday, two Sunday)
- ➔ Santa Cruz de la Palma, La Palma (€41, 3½ hours, one daily Sunday to Friday)
- ➔ Valverde, El Hierro (€49.50, 3¾ hours, 5.30pm Sunday to Friday)

Routes operated by **Fred Olsen** from Los Cristianos include the following:

- ➔ San Sebastián de la Gomera, La Gomera (€32, 50 minutes, three daily Monday to Friday, two daily Saturday and Sunday)
- ➔ Santa Cruz de la Palma, La Palma (from €42, two hours, one daily Sunday to Friday)